

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposition 50, Chapter 8 Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Grant

PIN	3848	COUNTY	Modoc
APPLICANT	North Cal-Neva Resource Conservation District	AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$471,135
PROJECT TITLE	Pit River Alliance Watershed Management Strategy	TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$471,135

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to develop a Watershed Management Strategy (WMS) for the 3,400 sq. mi. Upper Pit River Watershed in northeastern CA in order to identify the factors that are currently limiting or threatening healthy watershed conditions and full achievement of beneficial water uses in the Pit watershed; (2) identify a shared vision for desired future conditions in the watershed; (3) identify actions needed to address the limiting or threatening issues and achieve the desired condition; and (4) garner support for the needed actions from the watershed's principal stakeholders (i.e. private landowners, federal, state, and local agencies, resource managers, and resource advocates). Development of a WMS is the logical "next-step" to the recently completed Pit River Watershed Assessment.

WORK PLAN - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has a detailed and specific work plan that adequately documents the proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

Score: 6

Comment: The applicant proposes to develop a Watershed Management Strategy (WMS) for the Upper Pit River Watershed. The work plan, schedule, and budget are consistent. Completion dates are given for the various work items. The work items described to complete this plan are vague. Items are listed, but it is not clear how these activities will be realized. There are no deliverables listed. The proposal needs more description of how these work items will be carried out. The proposal appears to be for developing a WMS, not an IRWMP.

DESCRIPTION OF REGION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented a detailed and specific description that adequately documents the region. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 2

Comment: The region is 3400 sq. miles. The Pit River is currently listed as "impaired" by the EPA. There is no discussion about groundwater. Water related infrastructure is not described. The benefits of managing the region—as whole rather than individual areas—are not discussed. Important ecological processes and important social, cultural, and economic conditions are only slightly described. It is unclear if at least 2 public agencies are members of the water management group and have statutory authority over land use and water management.

OBJECTIVES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific planning objectives. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 6

Comment: The objective of the WMS is to reach some consensus within the watershed community regarding the issues, desired future conditions, and what actions are needed to achieve those conditions. These issues are related to what is limiting or threatening the watershed health and beneficial water uses. The current listed issues include water quality improvement, water supply needs for agriculture, instream flow, aquatic habitat, control of noxious species, and reduced channel erosion. There is no discussion of groundwater objectives. Statewide priorities are not directly described. How the objectives are determined is not mentioned.

INTEGRATION OF WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented how water management strategies will be integrated. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 4

Comment: The proposal states four strategies, but little is stated to describe or define these strategies. There is mention of channel stabilization and habitat, but there is no documentation discussing the integration between these two or with other strategies. The relationship between channel stabilization and reduced sediment loads is not mentioned. No other strategies are considered or mentioned.

IMPLEMENTATION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately detailed plan implementation. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 2

Comment: Implementation of the WMS would come from the various entities responsible for actual land management: landowners, the Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), and the public land management agencies. There is no schedule offered or discussion of how a schedule may be developed once the WMS is completed. The mechanisms to implement the WMS are assumed to exist within the various existing plans. These plans are listed. There is no discussion about how to monitor or evaluate implementation of the WMS. There does not appear to be a plan for an institutional structure to oversee any of the projects.

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IMPACTS AND BENEFITS - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately presented and documented the impacts and benefits of the Plan. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 6

Comment: Improvement in the watershed is anticipated to benefit timber, rangeland, agriculture, fish and wildlife resources, recreation, and the local economy. Although potential benefits due to the WMS are listed, no analyses of these benefits are mentioned. There is no mention of complying with CEQA.

DATA AND TECHNICAL ANALYSIS - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific data and technical analysis components of the proposal. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 2

Comment: Data collection supporting the WMS has occurred or is ongoing. This includes a 2004 Pit River Watershed Assessment, ongoing water quality programs with 46 stations, and numerous site-specific river restoration projects. Two examples of technical studies are briefly described, but they do not clearly state how these studies would support the WMS nor do they state which technical studies might be performed.

DATA MANAGEMENT - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific data management procedures. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 2

Comment: Data is collected from the various water quality monitoring stations. Water quantity and groundwater information is not described. How the data will be managed is not clearly stated. Information is made available at regular meetings of the Pit River Alliance and the individual RCDs, and websites, newsletters, brochures, and newspaper articles. The proposal does not mention how the data management will support statewide data needs.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented stakeholder involvement concerns. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 4

Comment: Stakeholder involvement is a strong point of the proposal and the stakeholders have previously been involved in doing a watershed assessment. Water-related entities are included in the planning process, but it is unclear what their role will be. One environmental justice concern is mentioned about farm workers. It is unclear if all appropriate stakeholders are included. There are some irrigation districts that are not currently signatories but are expected to join.

DISADVANTAGE COMMUNITIES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented disadvantaged community concerns. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 3

Comment: The entire study region is considered a DAC. It is assumed that residents will participate in the planning process. However, the application does not address water supply or water quality needs of these DACs directly. The Pit River region is in need of improved water quantity and quality. In addition, the City of Alturas is in need of an upgrade to its sewage treatment plant, which discharges to the Pit River. The applicant states that they will include DACs in the planning process but does not say how.

RELATION TO LOCAL PLANNING - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented the Plan's relationship to local planning efforts. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 3

Comment: Local agency planning documents are scarce, but the local agencies are actively supporting the project. Existing plans are listed in the implementation section and include the National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan, Bureau of Land Management Plan, annual and five-year RCD Plans, and individual farm and ranch conservation plans. These plans will be the mechanism by which the WMS is carried out. However, these plans are not included in the application so it is difficult to understand how they relate to one another. It is also not clear how the National Forest or BLM plans are specific to the local area. The applicant does not anticipate that the WMS will directly relate to or impact city or county planning, but those entities will be kept informed of activities.

AGENCY COORDINATION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented agency coordination issues. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 4

Comment: Coordination with local, state, and federal agencies appears to be through the MOU that makes up the Pit River Alliance and it is already underway. Though briefly mentioned throughout the proposal, no definitive coordination with land use planning decision makers is described. No specific coordination with state and federal regulatory agencies is described.

TOTAL SCORE: 44